

July 29, 2011

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends,

Sister Marie Welter went peacefully to God on her birthday at approximately 12:30 p.m. July 31, 2011 at the Holy Family Health Care Center, Victory Noll. Her two nieces, Patricia Goffron, and Susan DeLeon were with Marie when she died. Also present was Sister Ann Shirley. As they prayed at her bedside, a smile appeared on her lips as she entered eternal life. On Friday, July 15, Sister Marie suffered two major strokes. She was brought home from the hospital to Victory Noll. Sister Marie was unconscious and unresponsive. She was kept comfortable and Sisters visited her and prayed with her each day. Prior to sustaining the strokes, Marie was active, walking and participating in the life of the Sisters on the third floor of Holy Family. She was friendly toward all who would come to visit, and kept busy most of the day.

Sister Marie was born in Chicago, Ill., on July 31, 1916 to William Welter and Susan Wagner Welter. One brother, Joseph Welter, and one Sister, Beatrice Haxton, precedes her in death.

Sister Marie entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 27, 1944. She made her first Profession of Vows on August 5, 1947 at Victory Noll, and her Perpetual Vows on August 5, 1953 in Denver, Colo.

Marie served God and God's people in the missions of California, Colorado, Utah, Indiana, Florida, and Illinois. She began her missionary life in Redlands, Calif. serving as a Catechist in the parishes served by our Sisters living at Queen of the Missions. Sister Marie loved her life as a Catechist, and had great compassion and interest in the children who attended her classes. After several years of missionary work, Marie began studies toward a degree in Psychology. She completed her studies and a degree was conferred upon her from St. Joseph's College, Rensselaer, Ind. After completing her studies, Sister Marie had a strong desire to serve the elderly. For almost 20 years this became a ministry very close to her heart. She attended special classes in Gerontology at the University of Michigan and was certified for the three programs she completed. Marie then obtained a position in the Archdiocese of Miami. Together with Sister Mary Eleanor Clements and Sister Francene Merkosky, they arrived in Miami in the summer of 1970 to begin their ministry.

Gerontology was a relatively new science at that time, and Marie was about to demonstrate its importance. She began and became coordinator of a pilot program in Holy Family Parish, in North Miami. She worked tirelessly to involve the elderly in meaningful activities that would keep them not only alert and interested, but also involved in being of service to others. She called this program "COR." (Community Out Reach). She organized the Sisters and others to visit the homes of the parishioners, noted the needs of the elderly, and assisted them in meeting these needs. She made them aware of resources available. She identified leadership qualities among them, and developed programs accordingly. In this way, they formed a cadre of dedicated people in ministry. Sister Marie saw this as a ministry of Jesus, reaching out and providing hope, affirmation and love to people in need. Marie continued this ministry after leaving Florida in Salt Lake City, Utah, and in Chicago, Ill.

In the mid 1980's Sister Marie went to Chicago to be with and to care for her brother, Joseph, who had Parkinson's Disease. After her brother's house was sold, Sister Marie lived with the Sisters of the Resurrection in Chicago while continuing to care for Joseph. She continued to volunteer in Pastoral Ministry. She offered her time as a volunteer at the Norwood Park Home in Chicago where her brother Joseph became a patient, and at the Alzheimer's Disease Hospice. Marie gave loving care to her brother until God called him home. Whenever



possible she visited and shared prayer with our Sisters in Chicago. She also invited them for dinner at her brother's home once a year.

Sister Marie retired to Victory Noll in 2000. She ministered as travel and meal coordinator for the Sisters until 2008 when she became a patient in Holy Family.

At the Vigil Service on Monday evening, Sister Marie's niece, Patricia Goffron from Wood Dale, Ill. and her niece Susan DeLeon from Niles, Ill. were present. Sister Marie chose "On Eagles Wings" as the opening Hymn for the Vigil, and Isaiah 43:18-19 for the Reading. In the reading God promises that He is doing something new. God makes a path on our journey through the desert to eternal life. Now Marie experiences this new life with God. Sister Beaty gave the Eulogy. She highlighted Sister Marie's life with us, and her missionary journey especially her many years of ministry with the elderly. Beaty ended by saying, "We are grateful, Sister Marie, for your faithful service in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. We rejoice that you now share with all the saints eternal life with God."

After the service we went to the dining room for refreshments and to continue sharing our memories of Marie. The key themes from the general sharing was that Marie was a gifted, loving, zealous missionary whose desire was to spread the gospel of justice and freedom by enhancing the quality of life of all. Pat Goffron, her niece, shared that Marie inherited her artistic ability from her parents, especially her father. His woodcarving of an Altar, vessels, and Priest offering Mass is now on display in our dining room. Marie used this in the missions when training altar boys. Sister Rita shared that Marie gave her encouragement and was a mentor to her during her first year in the missions during some difficult times. She also said Marie supported and participated in the House of Prayer at Victory Noll. Sister Pat Knapp lived with Marie in Redlands, and found her to have a good sense of humor and one who had a gift for encouraging people.

On Tuesday August 2, 2011, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Sister Marie's nieces Pat Goffron and Susan DeLeon were present. Also present was Sister Margaret Daniels, CSSP, and Sister Jane Frances Hoffman, CSSP, Precious Blood Sisters from their Motherhouse in Dayton, Ohio. Sister Mary Daniel was a childhood friend of Marie since age three. They have continued to visit and communicate with each other whenever possible. After the sprinkling with Holy Water, Sister Alodia and Sue DeLeon placed the Pall on the casket, and Pat Goffron placed the crucifix. Sister Marie chose two very beautiful readings for her Mass — 1 Peter 1:3-9, and for the Gospel John 14:1-6. Each reading speaks of the dwelling place that God out of love is preparing for us. Each speaks of Jesus who by His resurrection from death makes possible for us this new birth to an imperishable inheritance. Father Fahey shared in his homily that Sister Marie believed in this new life after death. He said Sister Marie was a great missionary who helped the young and the old make sense out of life and especially helped them find their way to God. Father said that Sister Marie is with us this morning. He said, "We pray that Sister share fully in the power of the Mass. The Holy Mass is the lifting up of the Body and Blood of Jesus, and we are praying that Sister Marie be lifted up, washed in the blood of Jesus and swept up into heaven."

After Mass we processed to the cemetery, where we laid Sister Marie to rest with the final prayers, blessing of the casket, and the singing of the hymn to Our Lady of Victory, "We Have a Holy Mother." A delicious dinner to celebrate Marie's life followed.

Sister Marie, we thank you for walking this journey of faith with us. We rejoice that you are now participating in the heavenly banquet, and see the God you loved and served face to face.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Betty Anderson, O.L.V.M.

Sister Elizabeth Anderson, OLVM
General Secretary